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Letter dated 15 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to request that the present letter and the final communiqué of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), meeting in Mauritius from 17 to 19 May 2000 (see annex), be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Fares M. **Kuindwa**, EGH, EBS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Final Communiqué of the fifth summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Grand Baie, Mauritius
17-19 May 2000

The Fifth Summit of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Government was held at Grand Baie, Republic of Mauritius, from 17 - 19 May, 2000 under the theme: "COMESA FTA: Enhancing Investment and Competitiveness".

The Summit was attended by the following Heads of State and Government:

(a) His Excellency Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President of the Republic of Kenya.

(b) Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

(c) His Excellency Mr. Frederick J.T. Chiluba, President of the Republic of Zambia.

(d) His Excellency Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

(e) His Majesty King Mswati III, King of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

(f) His Excellency Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia.

(g) His Excellency Dr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi.

(h) His Excellency Didier Ratsiraka, President of the Republic of Madagascar.

(i) His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

The following Plenipotentiaries represented their countries:

(a) The Right Honourable General Moses Ali, Second Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda.

(b) His Excellency Amre Moussa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

(c) Honourable Girma Biru, Minister of Economic Development and Co-operation of Ethiopia.

(d) Honourable Joseph Ntanyotora, Minister of Commerce and Tourism of the Republic of Burundi.

(e) Honourable Ali Said Abdella, Minister for Trade and Industry of Eritrea.

(f) Honourable Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

(g) Honourable Dr. Mustapha Osman Ismail, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Sudan.

(h) Honourable Jeremie Bonnelame, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles.

(i) Honourable M. Waiss Elmi Obsich, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Crafts of the Republic of Djibouti.

(j) His Excellency Mohammed Abdou Madi, Head of Delegation of the Federal Islamic Republic of Comoros.

The following represented their Organisations at the Summit: Mr. Mike Moore, Director General, World Trade Organisation; His Excellency Vijay S. Makhan, Assistant Secretary General, Organisation of African Unity (OAU); Dr. Prega Ramsamy, Acting Executive Secretary, Southern African Development Community (SADC); Dr. Sam Nahamya, Deputy Executive Secretary, East African Co-operation (EAC); Mr. Athanassios Theodorakis, Deputy Director General (Development), Commission of the European Union (EU); Mr. Caabi E. Mohamed, Secretary General, Indian Ocean Commission (OIC); Dr. Michael Gondwe, Acting President, Eastern and Southern Africa Trade and Development Bank (PTA Bank), Mr. Shadreck Lubasi, Managing Director, PTA Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-RE); Mr. Isa Lukwago, Acting Executive Secretary, COMESA Clearing House; Dr. Robert Arunga, Director, Leather and Leather Products Institute (LLPI); Mr. Rolf W. Boehnke, Managing Director, Common Fund for Commodities (CFC); and Dr. Attala Hamad Bashir, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The following countries attended as observers: the United States of America; the United Kingdom; the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The following organisations were also represented: African Caribbean Pacific (ACP); African Development Bank (ADB); Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC); International Monetary Fund (IMF); United States Agency for International Development (USAID/REDSO/ESA); Intergovernmental Standing Committee on Shipping (ISCOS); United Nations (UN); United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the World Bank.

The Chairman of the Authority, President Daniel arap Moi, called the Summit to order and expressed gratitude to Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, the Government and the people of Mauritius, for the excellent hospitality accorded to all the delegations and for hosting the Summit. President Moi then invited His Excellency Dr. The Honourable Ramgoolam to address the Summit.

Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, welcomed the Heads of State and Government to the Republic of Mauritius. He stated that in order to achieve regional and international co-operation, national concerns must often be sacrificed in favour of regional or international interests to enhance the welfare of the people in the global village. He pointed out that the new wave of technological advances and the information superhighway were rapidly transforming the world into one global village in which government and national policies were being dictated by the international global environment.

Prime Minister Ramgoolam noted that the underlying principle of regional co-operation was the pooling of limited natural and human resources in order to maximize output in the most cost-effective way so as to enable the countries of Southern and Eastern Africa to address the problems of national development and cope effectively with the challenges posed by the changing and increasing complex global environment.

Prime Minister Ramgoolam drew the attention of the Heads of State and Government to the impending drought in the Horn of Africa and flood devastation in Madagascar and Mozambique and emphasised the need for the COMESA region to act collectively in disaster preparedness and post-disaster management.

Finally, Prime Minister Ramgoolam expressed his confidence that the meeting would succeed in promoting a more complete understanding of the problems confronting the COMESA region and in bringing about further progress towards integration of COMESA member countries.

His Excellency Daniel arap Moi, President of the Republic of Kenya and outgoing Chairman of the Authority, delivered a key note address in which he thanked His Excellency Cassam Uteem, President of the Republic of Mauritius, and Dr.The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, on behalf of his colleagues and on his own behalf, for hosting the Summit and for the warm hospitality extended to Heads of State and Government and all other delegations.

President Moi stated that the International Conferences or Summits that had recently taken place such as the Third WTO Ministerial Conference, the Tenth UNCTAD Conference, the First EU/Africa Summit of Heads of State or Government and the US National Summit on Africa had recognised the marginalization of our States in world trade and had shown the value of meaningful integration amongst countries of the region.

President Moi underscored the need for joint positions in international negotiations as exemplified at the Third WTO Ministerial Conference at which the COMESA region and the whole of Africa presented co-ordinated and joint positions. He pointed out that the combined efforts at the WTO Conferences illustrated the ways in which COMESA could be utilised as a vehicle for championing the interests of the region on many other issues.

Referring to the importance of regional integration, President Moi stated that the COMESA Economic Forum in Cairo, Egypt, from 28 to 29 February 2000 had demonstrated that a large economic space, such as the COMESA region, was attractive to foreign direct investment. He said that interest in COMESA had greatly increased with the expectation of launching the largest Free Trade Area in Africa on 31 October, 2000.

However, he pointed out that conflicts, both inter-state and intra-state, would have a negative impact on trade and economic development of the COMESA region, unless this were urgently resolved.

He further pointed out that COMESA needed to have a vision and strategy as a collective response to the ongoing globalisation of the world economy and in order to achieve sustainable development of the region.

In concluding, President Moi noted that COMESA had come a long way on a journey that required vision and courage. We said that COMESA member States should be proud of the progress already made which has so far been exemplary in Africa and beyond.

Mr. Mike Moore, Director General of the World Trade Organisation, also made a statement. Mr Moore commended the COMESA member States for the progress they had made in trade liberalisation. He highlighted the marginalisation of Africa in World Trade and called for the immediate need to address the problem. Mr. Moore urged the COMESA member States to anchor their policies in the opportunities made available from the WTO arrangement and called for a stronger relationship between Africa and the international community to address the development needs of the States.

Ambassador Vijay Makhan, Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, also made a statement. He noted that COMESA would be the first of the OAU regional block to attain an FTA within the framework of the Abuja Treaty. Ambassador Makhan then identified the areas of development that need attention in order to sustain the COMESA FTA once established.

The representative of the European Union, Mr. Athanassios Theodorakis also made a statement. He commended COMESA States for the progress they had made in regional integration. Mr. Theodorakis then identified the potential areas of co-operation between the EU and Africa under the New Partnership Agreement to be signed between the EU and ACP States on 8th June 2000.

His Excellency, Dr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi, moved vote of thanks to His Excellency Cassam Uteem, President of the Republic of Mauritius, and Dr The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius. In his statement, President Muluzi also thanked the Prime Minister for his inspiring address and for the warm hospitality and reception given to all delegates since their arrival. He also thanked all colleagues for attending the Summit, despite their national duties because of the importance they attached to COMESA.

President Muluzi noted that COMESA member States, despite political and economic diversity, would in a few months' time write their own history by declaring their region a Free Trade Area. He pointed out that COMESA would be made a very attractive destination for investment and the most prosperous bloc of the century.

He stated that it was encouraging to note that, for the first time, African countries were able to negotiate with developed countries on equal terms which was made possible by the preparations that were made both at the continental and regional level to agree on a common position in the WTO negotiations.

President Muluzi stated that the challenges of the new century were how to become more effective players in the global village. This, he said, could be attained by increasing exports and opening up markets to one another which would serve as a step to becoming internationally competitive by first becoming regionally competitive.

He pointed out that peace and stability would enable people to move freely within the region. In this respect, he emphasised that the promotion of democracy and the rule of law in COMESA member states were crucial.

Finally, he concluded by urging all COMESA member States to return home with a new zeal to see to it that the COMESA Free Trade Area would become a reality on 31 October, 2000.

The Authority unanimously elected Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, as Chairman, President Hosni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as Vice Chairman and His Excellency Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President of the Republic of Kenya, as Rapporteur, for a one year term.

Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in his acceptance speech, expressed gratitude to is colleagues for the confidence placed in him and assured the Summit that together with his Bureau, they would do everything possible to ensure the continued success of COMESA. In particular, Prime Minister Ramgoolam urged his colleagues to ensure that they all implement the COMESA Free Trade on 31st October 2000.

After the formal opening of the Summit, the Authority:

CONSIDERED and **ADOPTED** the Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Council of Ministers relating to COMESA activities and programmes.

REAFFIRMED their decisions to implement the COMESA Free Trade Area on 31st October 2000.

URGED all member States to publish by 31 July 2000 the necessary statutory legal instruments or gazettes for implementing zero customs tariffs on COMESA originating products from 31st October, 2000.

URGED all member States to include implementation of the COMESA Free Trade Area in their national fiscal budgets to their Parliaments.

AGREED to the request for an extension of the derogation accorded to Namibia and Swaziland which expires on 31st October, 2000 and **MANDATED** the Bureau of Council in consultation with Namibia and Swaziland to initiate a process of dialogue on the outstanding technical issues affecting trade relations of Namibia and Swaziland with COMESA member States, in view of the on-going renegotiations of the SACU Agreement.

DIRECTED the Bureau of Finance Ministers to develop a regional integration support programme, in liaison with the Special Ministerial Committee on the Implementation of the COMESA Free Trade Area, for negotiations with co-operating partners on the provision of support for the COMESA regional integration arrangement and economic reforms.

URGED countries from the region that were not members of the Regional Integration Facilitation Forum (RIFF) to consider joining the RIFF and **REQUESTED** the co-sponsors of the RIFF to assist such countries in undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of their participation.

AGREED that all member States implement the Second Phase of the Monetary Harmonisation Programme by introducing limited currency convertibility amongst themselves and implementing appropriate monetary and fiscal policies to underpin overall stabilization efforts which are key in promoting greater regional trade and investment.

EXPRESSED appreciation to the World Bank for its invaluable assistance in the establishment of the Regional Trade Facilitation Project (RTFP) to offer political risk guarantee in the COMESA region and Africa in general.

URGED all member States which have not joined the Regional Trade Facilitation Project to do so and **CALLED** on the international donor community to assist the member States which are not IDA-eligible to secure funding for investing in the Regional Trade Facilitation Project.

AGREED that all member States which have not yet set up National Payment System Modernization Committees on the modernization of the national payment system should urgently do so.

REAFFIRMED the decision to establish a Regional Investment Agency and **DIRECTED** the Secretariat to expedite work to set up the agency.

COMMENDED the COMESA Business Community for undertaking several initiatives supportive of the COMESA Integration arrangement and **URGED** the member States to support its activities and ensure that representatives of the business community are fully involved in the decision making process at the national level.

EXPRESSED appreciation to the Government of Egypt for organizing and hosting the First COMESA Regional Economic Conference and **URGED** the member States to adequately prepare for and participate effectively in the Second COMESA Regional Economic Conference to be held in Cairo, Egypt in 2001.

URGED the member States to act collectively in disaster preparedness and post-disaster management.

AGREED that negotiations on the implementation of the CNS/ATM system be expedited and **DIRECTED** COMESA Ministers responsible for Civil Aviation to meet by September 2000 to finalise the negotiations with the Safe African Skies Group.

URGED the member States whose National Telecommunications Operators have not yet signed the COMTEL Investment Company's Shareholders Agreement to encourage them to do so as soon as possible.

AGREED to open for signature the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, the Right of Establishment and Residence.

ADOPTED the Agreement Establishing the African Trade Insurance Agency to guarantee political risk and non-commercial risk involved in international transactions and opened if for signature for those Member States willing to participate in the project.

REITERATED the need for the member States to implement the past decisions of the Authority for the member States to support ZEP-RE so as to facilitate the operations of the institution.

AGREED that member States support ZEP-RE by removing or refraining from imposing any trade impediments that hinder the activities of the company in their respective territories.

URGED member States which have not yet joined the PTA Bank to take up membership of the Bank as soon as possible.

APPRECIATED the support of COMESA programmes by all co-operating partners and requested all co-operating partners to continue support to COMESA programmes that are essential for the effective functioning of the Free Trade Area and integration of the COMESA region into the world economy.

REQUESTED Member States, to the extent possible, to adopt a common approach to multi-lateral negotiations.

RECOGNISING the progress already made in co-ordination between COMESA and other regional economic groupings, agreed on the need for continued harmonization of their programmes with a view to avoiding duplication and directed the Bureau of the Authority and Council to initiate dialogue with the Bureaux of other regional economic groupings within the framework of the African Economic Community.

HAVING regard to their commitment under Articles 3, 6 and 163 of the COMESA Treaty to co-operate in the promotion of peace and security and stability, agreed on the need for member States to continue resolving any conflicts, through the established OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and other regional organisations.

ADOPTED the Report of the First Meeting of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs including the continued utilisation of a three-tier structure composed of the Authority, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Committee on Peace and Security for addressing issues on peace and security.

MANDATED the Bureau of the Authority to carry out the function of conflict prevention and resolution through preventive diplomacy having regard to the need to consult the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution and other relevant African sub-region organisations.

EXPRESSED appreciation to His Excellency Daniel Toroitich arap Moi and his Bureau for the excellent work done during their one year term of office.

EXPRESSED gratitude to Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, the Government and the people of the Republic of Mauritius, for the warm and fraternal hospitality extended to all the delegates.

His Excellency, Frederick J. T. Chiluba, President of the Republic of Zambia, proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. President Chiluba thanked the Prime Minister, Government and the people of Mauritius for their warm welcome and outstanding hospitality extended to the delegates during the Summit. He said that all his colleagues and the delegates were sure that the incoming Chairman and his Bureau would continue to propel COMESA to greater heights.

President Chiluba then invited all the Heads of State and Government to the Extra-ordinary COMESA Summit to be held in Lusaka, Zambia on 31st October, 2000 for launching the COMESA FTA.

Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in closing the Summit, thanked his colleagues for their attendance. He also thanked them for the confidence they had placed in him as Chairman and the Bureau as a whole. He assured his colleagues that the Bureau would endeavour to continue with the excellent work done by the outgoing Bureau in pursuing the COMESA Agenda. Dr. Ramgoolam noted that the Summit had taken important decisions, and he called for the timely implementation of all the COMESA programmes. Finally, Dr. Ramgoolam reiterated the need for continuing the promotion of peace and security in the region.

The Authority adopted its Final Communiqué as read by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Honourable Manou Bheenick, Minister of Economic Development, Productivity and Regional Development of the Republic of Mauritius.

DONE at Grand Baie, in the Republic of Mauritius on 19th May, 2000 in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic.